

Helping the victims and sur-vivors of Organised Violenceand Torture in Zimbabwe

So
my walk
been above what
adverse unit. With my colleague
and partner The crime Tony
Rilla. We are looking at
helping the victims and
survivors of organised violence
and torture in Zimbabwe. On the
back of a report that Tony
We'll be launching shortly. we
are meeting on a day, momentous
day when war is broken out in
Europe. Frightening
consequences. We hope that
people out there will come to
their senses and this doesn't
develop is something that we we
fear might be terrible. for the
especially for the innocent
civilians in that region. So
without much ado I want to call
on my colleague Tony Rilla to
take over and take us through.
Tori.

Thank you very much Ebo and
greetings everyone. Uh and
welcome to this joint policy
dialogue on as Ibo said on a
very auspicious day. Uh a day
that people characterized by
war. But those of us who work
in the field of mental health
characterise this as a period
of organised violence and
torture. As organised violence
and torture is what happens
during war. and what we're here
to discuss today is the
consequences of organized
violence and torture. Uh in

times of war, in times of civil disturbance, and in times of elections, and Zimbabwe as you know, is moving into an election next year and many of the signs are very unpropitious if I might say. So, this dialogue bring together a panel of experts. Um it should have been moderated by Doctor Francis Dubmore, director of the Counselling Services Unit, who have experienced the problems that victims of organised violence and torture suffer. Unfortunately it's a medical person and she's dealing with a medical emergency. So she may join us or not. So I've stepped in this moderator. I I'm not going to say very much at the beginning because I think we have a very very experienced panel to discuss this. Um firstly, the keynote presenter is Craig Hixon Smith, who is the director of research and advocacy at the Centre for Victims of Torture, the Centre of Victims of Torture, has been in existence for, I think, more than 20 years, and was a very significant influence. the whole anti-torture movement. Predominantly by convincing the United States government that what needed to be done was to create a a a budget line which has to be authorised every year for support to the victims of torture. Craig himself is well versed in the understanding of

what happens in Southern Africa. Uh since he was a very young man, he has been working with torture victims during the apartheid through the post independence years and working with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He has worked widely right across the world. Dealing with victims of torture. In many many different countries and has worked extensively in Zimbabwe itself. Um so he is extremely well qualified to give us very broad overview of what happens to people when organised violence and torture takes place. He's joined by Anna Moyer who's the director of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. Uh CSVR as we know it more commonly was one of the very very first African centers to pick up the Kajals in defence of the victims of torture. This goes way back into the apartheid years when CSVR was a a project within Dits University called the project for the study of violence and reconciliation. And after 1990 and a very important conference here held in Harari on the health consequences of organised violence and torture. CSVR established itself as a independent organisation and has been very very active right across the continent. A very important partner in the

formation of the African Union principles now on transitional justice. And has been a strong partner of organisations within Zimbabwe. she's joined by Olivia Manguru who's a psychotherapist and psychologist working with the victims of organised violence and torture at the counselling service unit. She has a wealth of experience in our country about what it means to be a victim and survivor of organised violence and torture. In the background from the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims is Askar Kiru I hope I'm pronouncing that correctly. who is juggling two balls at the moment. He's participating. He may have time to speak but he's juggling other things. Uh the IRCT has been an enormous influence of anti-torture movement right across the world. Um the organisations in Africa the tree of life. What was the Imani Trust, the counselling services unit, CSV, the African Centre for Torture Victims right across Africa. The IRCT has been instrumental in Africa in building a robust and active anti-torture movement. Specifically, as the name suggests, with an interest in rehabilitation. And in the interest in rehabilitation, they quite clearly also have a major interest in prevention.

Because as those of us who work in this field, we all know that prevention is 50 times more important than cure. So what one has to do and the anti-torchi movement is to stop organised violence or torture. And we hope that that's what we will hear in the coming days. In Eastern Europe. Is it Russia and everybody else will work out that there are better ways to solve this problem than by creating vast numbers of victims. So without that I would really like to invite Craig Hudson Smith to join us and to give us his thoughts about organised violence and torture. And what we need to do to assist the victims of organised violence and torture. Craig, over to you. Thank you, Tony. And hello to everyone. It's it's an enormous privilege to have this opportunity to support the release of this new report. Um, I was reflecting as I was preparing for this talk. Of how many of these reports I have read over the years. And I say that no means to diminish the report but to say how important it is that we keep on doing the work of documenting the impact of organised violence and torture that we keep on publishing. That we keep on using every means we have available to draw public attention, to draw the attention of policy makers, to draw the attention of the state, to the the harm that is

perpetrated through organized violence and culture. And so over time there's this development of a weight of documentation of harm that is necessary for a country to move beyond that harm. And to progress and to grow and to become more peaceful. Um and to become healthier. And so this report is one more piece of that growing weight of evidence. Calling attention to the work that we all do and the work that we all need to do going into the future. It's also a great privilege to see in the introduction to the report. So much of the stuff that I've been involved with over the years. The various organisations that we've built to do this work. Um and as Tony said I won't repeat his comments but the work of CSVR, the work of Sinani and KwaZulu-Natal which I was involved in. The work of the Iman trust, the work of IOCT, the work of Tree of Life. Um and many many other organisations besides all of that continuous building and work and all the struggles and all the difficulties that we've been through. It really gave me pause to sort of slow down and reflect on both how hard this work is. And how much I have got out of it. And how much I appreciate all the people that I've worked with in this work. So with those brief introductory

comments, I'm going to start hopefully sharing my screen. I have prepared some slides to help me along here. Um And so you're up and we can see. Great. Thank you Tony. So I've stolen the cycle of the report. I thought I would just save myself the trouble of being creative and thinking of something for myself. So I stole the title. Um and the first point I want to make is really to go back to some of the basics. Um and think about what is the character of organised violence and torture. And I'm very aware that I'm I'm preaching to the choir as we say or that that everyone on the call with us today really has deep experience of this. But I think sometimes we we forget and it's it's worth just kind of going back to the basics and remembering that these are that are premeditated and calculating. There are crimes that are intimately connected to the victim's beliefs, to their behaviours in the world, or to aspects of their identity. very commonly organised violence and torture is prolonged. Or it's repeated or it's ongoing. People are in many ways trapped in ongoing cycles of harassment, intimidation, detention, war. the perpetrators tend to have tremendous power. And that makes organised violence and torture either literally inescapable. Or it makes it

feel inescapable. And on top of all of this very commonly victims are stigmatised, blamed and isolated from the support structures. That they would normally use to heal and recover. And so when we speak about organised violence and and torture, we're talking about a very particular set of crimes that produce a very particular set of harms and a very particular kind of damage on the psyche of individuals, on families, on communities and on society as a whole. And that's certainly a theme. I'm I want to to emphasise. the report speaks a great deal about the high prevalence rates of common mental disorders in Zimbabwe. And many of those studies are shocking. That the the rates of of common mental disorders are as high as they are in per certain parts of the populations at certain times during the history of the country. And the report does a a really good job of documenting all the studies that have been done over time. Looking at the ad common mental disorders. But for me those mental disorders are not the problem. What they are is a is a bright flashing neon sign that points us at the problem. These studies are incredibly important because measuring common mental disorders is something we know how to do. And we know how to do it fairly well and we know what a healthy

society looks like. These disorders are present in every society. But when a society is systematically victimised through organised violence over decades. We see a very particular pattern. We see a change in the prevalence rates of many of these disorders. To the point where the majority of people within the society are suffering at some level. Um and so for me bringing attention to the prevalence rates is a way of drawing a real clear line in the sand to say, look, this is the harm. We can see the harm, we can document the harm. This comes from somewhere. And that's why we have to keep on asking the questions around what are the prevalence rates around common mental health disorders that are associated with suffering violence. And so, you know, one of the, the core recommendations to come out of the report, is a prevalent study to, to, to really look at, you know what is the situation of the Zimbabwean population? All of us on this call know what the answer is. We know the answer is horrible. But we need the data. We need the evidence. And that goes back to my theme of constantly building on our evidence based. But as I say the mental health disorders themselves are not the problem. They're a sign of the problem. So then how do we think about what the problem is? And For

this I go to ecological models
always. Um and ecological model
is a model that places the
individual at the centre but
then recognises that that
individual exists within
relationship with many other
people. Families, colleagues at
work, school friends, peers.
And then those interpersonal
networks exist within
communities. Community might be
geographically defined. Or they
might be defined in other kinds
of ways. For example a
community of of mental health
practitioners is another kind
of community. And then all of
those communities exist within
society at last at large. and I
think that when you look at the
work of organised violence and
torture and it is work. It's
intentional work designed to
victimise people and networks
and organisations and families.
When you look at that work it's
really about achieving two
things. fragmentation, and
silencing. So let me give a
couple of examples at different
levels to to illustrate that a
little bit. If we think about
individual human beings one of
the things that violence does
and one of the things that
trauma does is it breaks apart
our memory. It breaks apart the
narrative of our experience, of
ourselves. And so our memories
become fragmented. Equally, one
of the ways of thinking about
trauma is that trauma is
literally the unspeakable.

There is, there is neurological evidence that shows that parts of our brain, a part of our brain called Broca's region, which is directly connected to our ability to communicate and speak. Is incapacitated when we are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. for example. And so, in a very fundamental neurological way, trauma actually silences us. I've spent lots of time face to face with victims of awful violence. And so many people say I have no words to explain what this feels like. And that's literally true. They do not have the words. And so the trauma silences people. If we think about it as an interpersonal level. Think about the families who have suffered in past general Terrible violence or perhaps have been involved in perpetrating terrible violence. And how those secrets are held within families. Parents and grandparents wonder whether they can share the truth of what they have been with through with the next generation. And when they don't share, when there's this this hidden story, this family secret that the youngest generation knows about but knows nothing about, It starts to be a fragmentation in the family. There starts to be a breakdown in trust. And so again we see the silencing and

the fragmentation. Within families. At a community level, think about the school teacher who wants to teach history. Who wants to teach the history of Zimbabwe honestly. But is afraid about what will happen if she talks about her experience of the history of her community, of, of her country. There's a silent thing, there's a loss of learning, there's a loss of history. And you think about the divided communities, the loss of trust within communities. The fragmentation that has happened within communities. And then as we head right out to the society level I can't help thinking about the enormous Zimbabwe diaspora. Many of whom are in South Africa. Many of whom are in the United States where I also work. And and thinking about the terrible kind of situation they're in where they so badly want to support their families and communities back home and do that. By money but in so doing helplessly continue to support a failing state and a state that has subjected its citizens to organised violence for decades now. I think also of the distrust of the state, the inability to maintain law and order, the inability to have trust in courts and court decisions, the inability of the press to do their work as, as, as a free press. All of these are ways in which society as,

as a whole, are, is fragmented and, and the, the, agencies that make society work are silenced.

And so I really reject a a medicalised understanding of the impact of organised violence and torture. I think it is fundamentally a political problem. And I use political in the broader sense of the word there that it engages all of society. All of the mechanisms and the machinery of society. And so if I understand the impact of organisation organised violence and torture through this lens of fragmentation and silencing.

Well then what do have to offer in terms of what is healing, what does helping look like. And for me it's the opposite.

It's that all of our work is organised around these fundamental principles of building solidarity. And building agency. And there are many many ways of doing that and I'm going to leave some some space for us all to think about and talk about many of the ways that that is already happening in Zimbabwe. Throughout this history civil society organisations, faith-based organizations in Zimbabwe have picked up the work of protecting people and of caring for people. Of of bringing people together, of creating unity. And many of the people are responsible for that worker on this call. So it's

not my place to speak about that. I want to just highlight these two core principles. I also want to speak a little bit about layering. I think this is fundamentally important. And certainly as I've got older I've been doing this work for more than 30 years now. I've started to understand the layers and to understand the importance of layering. And I've started to think about how the history of organised violence and torture. is one layer upon another layer upon another layer. of violence. That sits in the histories of our societies. In Zimbabwe society, in South African society, all around the world. And as I think about what's happening in Europe at the moment, I think about the next layer that is being laid down of suffering and hardship. And how at each point along the way we construct and we reconstruct the narratives of of organised violence and torture. And you know the in Zimbabwe there are there are many landmarks. There's the the second Chimarenga. There's Gakuru Hundi. There's the violence. Um 10 or 12 years ago. There's Marimba Thina. Uh there were all these landmarks that we have in our memories. But then of course those are just the things that have stood out and been named. But all along the way if you look at the community level. If you look at

family level there have been these layers and layers and layers of violence. And we have to recognise that. We have to recognise the intergenerational impact. And we have to look how at the waist trauma is carried from the past forward into the present and into the future.

And many individuals and organisations and networks have a special role in the way they carry trauma forwards.

and most of the time we do that with the intention of healing and the intention of memorialising and remembering the past. with a hope to

preventing similar things happening in the future and building a better society But we also need to recognise that trauma can be carried forward in ways that are not healing.

There are people in South Africa today who will bring up the Anglo World War with the intention of creating political power and building political power and building division between English and Afrikaans speaking white people in South Africa. There are people who deny the Holocaust and they do so today carrying trauma forward in a way that is in the end I believe damaging to our society and damaging to our future. So we have to think about how trauma is carried forward.

So if we are working with this layering, we have to think about how we do the work of

creating a shared narrative within society and within within our communities. A common understanding of what we have been through and how that defines us now and into the future. In order to achieve that we need safety, we need transparency. And we to do the work of excavation and documentation. So as I think of these layers, I think of a kind of archaeological dig. And I realised that sometimes I'm talking about a literal archaeological dig. Where we are opening graves from the past in order to find the truth.

But we have to do that work. We have to do the excavation work. We have to go back through the layers. And we have to document at each point along the way. One of the things that we really suffered from in the Truth Commission in South Africa is that during the apartheid years we hadn't done enough documentation. We didn't have enough evidence of the atrocities that had been committed under apartheid. And so we were limited in the extent to which we could hold the perpetrators of those atrocities accountable as we transitioned into the South Africa we have today. That process of excavation and documentation is fundamental. And then we have the work of truth telling and memorialisation. Um the

National Peace and Reconciliation Commission in Zimbabwe. As with the with South African Truth and Reconciliation has flaws. And is is open to criticism and I've been very vocal in my criticism of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and and how it failed victims. But at the same time it also started the process of creating that shared national dialogue. That shared national and narrative of what has happened to us in the past. And what it means for our future. And a create space for the other levels. It creates space for the community archives and the community histories. For the family histories and the individual histories. And so all of those levels are really important. and then I want to speak a little bit about roles. I'm I'm going to pull out four roles here. The role of victim and survivor. The role of bystanders. Those of us who have stood by and watched atrocities happen. The role of the advocates and the helpers. And of course the role of perpetrators. And it's fundamental to recognise that at different times and in different situations. Most of us been in all of these different roles in some way or other. We have to recognise that we are all part of this emerging

picture. And that we're all harmed. And that we all have a role in stopping future harm. Or if we make bad choices. Perpetrating it all. Um perpetuating it. But for me it's really important that we change this picture and we make the picture look something like this. And is that as we work as a third principle we constantly work on centreing the experience and the needs and the risks taken by victims and survivors. So it's the people who are in that role. when we consider any particular event or atrocity that we have to foreground. And that's not what generally happens. In that is in fact very often the victims and the survivors are in the background and they are the people who are forgotten. Even though they carry more than any of us the harm and the hurt perpetrated by the atrocity. So, it's easy to say, how do we send her victims? What is, what does, what does victim centred transitional justice? What is victim-centered healing look like? I don't claim to have all the answers at all, but I can tell you some of the things that, that I've tried and we're trying in the Centre for Victims of Torture. One of the things we've done is to start our work by asking questions. And two of the fundamental questions that we've been asking victims are, what does mean for you? And what does

justice mean for you?
And the answers are not always what people around on this meeting would expect. I have been surprised repeatedly by the answers I get when I ask people these questions seriously. And when I put aside my assumptions and my prejudices and really listen. and one of the things that happens is this enormous pressure that everyone needs healing and everybody deserves a kind of legal justice. is reliefd because lots of victims are not asking for psychotherapy and they're not asking for reparations and to be the centre of a court case where the person who hurt their family or hurt them goes prison for life. Or they're not asking for a huge amount of money. They're asking for things that are actually achievable. And realistic. And possible within our transitioning societies. Especially in the global south. Where where there aren't the resources to to to give people what what is envisaged for example in the convention against torture when we speak about reparation. There's just too many victims. They're just it's it's just becomes an overwhelming problem. But when we actually ask about what people mean when they talk about healing and justice. We get answers that actually are reasonable and realistic given our society's resources.

Another part of centring victims is about giving people real choices. So in one of our programmes we have several pathways which the victims we work with can choose to engage. For example they can choose that their path to healing for themselves and their path to justice involves on public awareness raising. And then what we do is we facilitate their work either within their country or internationally to raise awareness on what has happened in their community and to them as populations. And so we're focusing on that giving people voice. On giving people agency. Creating platforms. Whereby victims of organised violence and torture can broadcast their message more effectively. another choice is to engage in creative writing as a healing and a process of healing and acquiring justice. And that might be telling your story in a way that's just for you and your family. Or it might be putting your story on the internet or getting your story out there into newspapers and and other other platforms. Or we create ways in which victims can become involved in policy work. In community organising. And and policy engagement. Um around whatever issues are that are affecting their community. And so again it's around organising, connecting, building solidarity and giving

agency or facilitating agency. You can never give agency. Um one of the avenues we invite people into is to help us with research. Unfortunately for me as director of evaluation and research I don't get a lot of takers. Um most people want to go in other directions. But it's there. It's a possibility of helping us learn how to do the work of healing individuals, families and society better. And then finally there is the one we are most often think about and that is the journey of legal accountability. And as we think about all of these kind of options, we have to have real conversations about risk. We have to talk about what does this mean for the survivors and the victims who put themselves forward. And sometimes you know those conversations are hard. The implications family. The implications for many many years of life in long legal battles. The implications of having your story out there in the world in a way that you can never take it back. A real implications that we have to discuss with in a in a realistic way with survivors and victims. We have to build systems of continuous consent and we have to create feedback loops so that people remain engaged with the ongoing work of healing and justice their societies. And so with that I think I've overdone my time.

And I'm going to just say thank you all for listening to my thoughts on this and I'd love to to hear your thoughts and engage with you in a conversation. I'd love for you to get in touch with me.

There's my email address on the screen. Thank you all for your attention.

Craig. That was extremely rich. I know that that's an immensely long digestion of basically a lifetime's work actually. I mean you started this work I think when you were actually quite a young man. and ah I think that's a very important destination I I one question before I go to ask you and that is the your experience has taken you to multiple places. I mean I know you've worked in the Middle East. I know you've worked in Latin America. I know you've worked all over the place. Um I'm presuming that these observations you have are generalities or commonalities that you've seen in all these different places. I mean the distillation about the fragmentation for example and that effect on societies. And then the calorie of that which is the notion of solidarity in ages. I mean maybe you could say a little bit about the spread of this internationally in your experience.

Oh Tony I mean thank you for that question. Yes these are, these are really deep, broad

constructs. Um, and I think they have to be to have the kind of universal generality that I am working with as, in my, in my role. Um, and that, that I think we need as a, as a society, and as, as a world, and so, at at Compare My work in in El Salvador. El Salvador I was a Latin American countries have much in common with Southern African countries. In terms of the liberation movements having a really deep political analysis and political richness and and a deep understanding of the fundamental importance of solidarity. And so my work in El Salvador really when I started to talk about solidarity people already knew it all. They already had the networks. They already understood the dangers of infiltration. They it's it's part of the DNA of how many Latin American countries and civil society and many Latin American countries works and operates. And in many ways work in Latin America is the most resonant for me of work in Southern Africa. When I compare that to work in the Middle East and I'm going to use Egypt as an example. Still society in Egypt at the moment is so divided. There is so suspicion between different organisations, between different networks. That just finding a solid meeting point for people who are concerned

about building a better society is incredibly difficult. And so there are so many layers of damage to the fabric and the solidarity of civil society actors. Um that it becomes really hard to even find a starting place to build from. And so the work that we're doing in Egypt is really about you know finding the beginnings of solidarity, repairing relationships. And for me this is an example where the agents of organised violence and torture have been successful in their work. They've divided us so much. That for us even begin to do the work requires some initial foundation building work. Um and and the and the same kind of thing is true of of of countries in South East Asia. Um where I've had the privilege to to work with with so many incredibly brave people who are who are often working in isolation. And to link to the other theme. When you are fragmented. When there is no solidarity then your agency is very limited. Then a couple of people fighting the machine. And the machine is huge. And the machine is powerful and and and there's no room. Um and so yes I think these are universal themes to guide the work. Um and in every case how we operationalise them. How that turns into the work on the ground looks different in every community. In every country. Thanks very much, Craig. I'd

I'd like to change the program slightly and move to Asco.

Asca, you sit at the apex of a vast network of organizations dealing with all the problems that Craig had outlined for us. And the IRCT has been a light in the world.

decades now in the anti-torture movement these are now actually quite dark times. You know, from the Halcyon days when we set up the IRCT and the Vienna Declaration, the Vienna Conference and the passing of all sorts of important international conventions.

What has happened is we've now seem to be on the edge of a really dark age. Uh democracy and retreat. Uh and much greater concerns. And so I'd be very interested in your remarks from where you sit. At the apex of I I'm not entirely sure anymore how many organisations belong to the IRC team. But they cover every single continent and they deal with ongoing violence. And they deal with people who fled violence into Denmark and Sweden and Britain and everywhere else. So ask I I I know you've pressed, pressed for time, but we'd be very grateful for your remarks. Oscar, over to you. Thank you so much Tony and and really thanks thanks for switching around and and I apologise I had a conflicting thing with my son's school that they will not be very happy if I if I skipped

unfortunately so it's one of those family things you can't get out of. Um and and thank you so much for those nice words about about the IICT. It's it's extremely kind and I hope I think that the organization has not always lived up to those words but I hope that that that we we do so now and and and that we can can continue to do so in in the future. Um so so this is a bit of a it's it's always a very I think interesting but also slightly difficult way to to come into this discussion from the IICT because I think we recognize that the situation in the countries where we work is highly complex and and we are not the national experts and and we don't have a one size fits all approach. So so what we can try to do is is share the things that we see around in the network around in the world. Um that might be useful. Um and then you should obviously feel free to to discard it. Uh I can also share some some and I will some some thoughts and also reflections on what Craig was saying from from my time working for 15 years now in the organization as a as a legal professional Um and and I think finally maybe I can I can give a a little bit of hope. Uh at least I I hope so. But but let let me just start by I mean it was I I was I was listening to to Craig and it it just kind of made my mind

almost explode in in in all the things that I thought I wanted to say. Uh but I think you know when you talk about healing and justice, it it is very illustrative of one of the problems that we are still grappling with in this sector, which is that the the legal professions and the let's let me call them health professionals or the people who come more from the the healing side. We have still not found the I think the most effective way of of working together and really strengthening each other. So so so for example one of the things that that we can see is that and I think this very much goes along with what what Craig is saying is that while the legal construct of reparation and the fire forms and so on. It it is it is helpful as a way for lawyers and you know legal mechanisms to think about what is it that we are obligated to do. Uh when somebody has been exposed to a violation. Uh but but it makes it extremely difficult to bring survivors and victims perspectives. And needs into that discussion because it is so highly legally theorised. I mean it's really just you know it's a theory about what people need or should have. Uh but but but it's very very difficult often to match that with with reality. So so one of the things well two things that

we're we're trying to do in in that regard and and that that hopefully I I hope this can can be useful because it is a bit you know it's not directly focused on on on Zimbabwe. Um but but two things. One is that we are working very actively now to to dispel this notion that documentation of torture is only important for Criminal justice purposes. Uh and really trying to move into an understanding where this is actually much more continuum. Where the first value of documenting torture is simply that you help to establish the truth. That you put some kind of credible evidence to what has happened So that it is no longer as deniable. And that we start to to try to help contribute to creating some kind of of history. In your understanding that maybe in 20 years, it can also be used to hold perpetrators accountable. But even if it never is, it is still very valuable, because it helps to start both for the individual, but also for the community and society, to start more, let's say, objectively establishing what has happened, and I know for all of you, this sounds totally trivial, but, but from the and the the international law perspective Uh it it isn't. And and and that's part of the problem because as long as lawyers dominate that part of the discussion, it often becomes

about, well, why would we document? Because there's no perspective of ever having a criminal case. Right? Um So so so that is something that we work very hard to to deal with. Uh another issue and this comes very close to what Craig was talking about is that we are trying to make sure that the different international investigations. So investigations by the UN especially of massive atrocities like the situation in in Syria and Yemen and and many other places where they open investigations. That that has a much stronger focus on rehabilitation and reparation but also on what trying to understand what is it that victims want from these processes because all these investigations are ultimately created with some kind of vision that in the future there will be a transitional scenario But but what we're struggling with and what I'm really hoping that and I was so inspired already from from Craig's presentation but this is something that that that I think we can all take forward together. What we're struggling with is to say, well, how do we actually merge when you have the UN who has to speak into these five different tones of reparations and and which are quite meaningless as a framework for asking survivors or victims what they want. The

how how do we start actually really talk together. So so that we can get get some real empowerment of victims and survivors also in these processes. Um so so that's that's really something that that that we are these are some of the things we're working on at the moment. Uh parts of it we're actually doing with CSV. Um and and I think this is also something that we are extremely proud of in recent years in IICT to that that we are increasingly actually really understanding how much knowledge and value sits in the individual members and and try to harm that so that it can be made available to everyone. Just maybe a couple of other points on this. We are and to get a little bit more practical. Um we are in the process of developing a series of documentation tools that are intended to be used in situations of of protests. Um so so that might be something that that that colleagues in Zimbabwe could find useful to look at looking into the future. They're not they're designed some are designed health professionals but many of them are also designed for lay persons. So basically protesters and activists to use to start the the process of of of documenting and understanding more basic principles around how to do that. Um the the second more

practical point I guess that I just wanted to highlight was the adoption last year of the ISCT's global standards and rehabilitation which we hope being a a document that the membership has negotiated since 2015. Um we really hope that one of the utilities of it can be that our members can use it as a dialogue tool both with states but also with donors to show this is it should look like, This is what you should pay for, and, and therefore, hopefully, be a, be a, a help in, in putting a little bit more of an, let's say, objective basis for that, that discussion, that, that, that, of course, we, we hope to have, so that while we try to prevent short term from happening, those that are still tortured, are not left eh, without support. Um, And I think now now for the for the hope. So so I I agree with you, Tony, that, that, I mean, these are dark times, I'm currently based in, in Mexico, where I work from, and, and I can assure you that, that, that the situation here, both in terms of how much torture, how many disappearances and how little justice there is. It is, it is not promising. Eh, but what there are two things that that I think from our sector is really promising. Uh the one is that we see that people have not stopped going to the street to demand democracy. Quite the

contrary. They continue and they increasingly go to the street to demand democracy in human rights. So so so it is it is also a time where where there there is a a there is not an acceptance in of these societies of the way that things are going. It is there's still a lot of resistance and and I think growing young popular movements who really want something different. And I think that is really promising. I think the other thing and this is a little bit more close to home. Uh that is promising for me is that probably it for the first time since I have been in the ISMT. Uh so the last 15 years, the the international anti-tortal movement, So the, the, between 5 and 10 organizations that work let's say, more or less globally, on total related issues. Uh, have finally come together in, in a, in a much stronger sense of, of unity. And, and no longer fighting each other over petty little and I think that brings hope because it also brings possibilities for much more united action. For example, if we are looking at a new scenario with elections in Zimbabwe, and if there is if if you think that there is a relevance and need for more concerted international action possibly even before that is much more likely to work to become frank. Uh today, then it

was five years ago or even 3 years ago. And I think that for our little sector, that for me gives me gives me a lot of hope. So, so I think, I think I'll end, with that, we are these tools that I talk about, we are also presenting them to the power network. Uh, I didn't have a slide, so I haven't put up my email, but Tony, you have it you're more than welcome to share it. It's not a it's not a secret at all, so, but, but we're really, really, we're not as big as we used to be, but with the resources that we have, we're more than a, more than happy to, to really engage and, and, and see how we can, we can best be supportive with something that, that actually makes a difference for you. So, but, but thank you so much for hosting this, and, I'm, I'm really happy to be here. Thank you Aska. I'm not sure how quickly you have to rush before the teacher spansks you and your son. But maybe I can post something to you that links to both Craig and yourself. And that is many, many, many years ago, in the aftermath of what people call the third wave of democracy, the collapse of the European autocracies in Latin America. Louis won a posed fundamental rights to be able to deal with the situations that deal with. The right to truth, the right to justice, the right to non-reoccurrence, and the right to reparation. It

strikes me that one of the things that has happened to the anti-torture movement is I'm I'm I'm picking up very much on your notion of lawyers talking to healers. Is we've we've disaggregated that. People work different channels. You know, I work on justice, I work on truth, I work on this. Surely, one of the answers is and I think that's implicit in what Craig's talking about. Is let's put the whole together. You can't solve this problem without this holistic notion. It's an I'm hearing what you're saying that this is a a new learning is is is my sense of this correct.

so I I think the, okay, the, I'll give you a, one of the few anecdotes that I know from, from before my own time at IICT. So, during the very first meeting, after UN committee against torture, I believe it was back in 1989. The the, the committee met for the very first time, they had their first session and eh, and they of the committee members, they went out for dinner the same night. Um and during the dinner, one of the committee members who was a lawyer, he's one out of nine lawyers in the committee at that time. He asks Ben Johnson who who was one of the the founders of the ISCT who was also a member of the of the committee. He asked him, so what are you doing here? You're a doctor. And then Ben Johnson

responded, what are you all
nine doing here? Your lawyers,
right? And and so that's where
it started. And so there was
this total sense of no eye on
this. I own this. I own this.
Um that then I mean this is my
perception of history right?
Then there has been and there
could continues to be something
that I'm sure psychologists can
analyse. Which is a quite
interesting cross fascination
where where many health
professionals in our in our
sector try to be be lawyers
because they're very fascinated
with that. And many of the
lawyers try to build in
festivals because we're very
fascinated with that. And has
kind of seems to have been
going going on all of the time.
Then with the Istanbul protocol
we managed to somehow meet in a
way where we said okay my
skills come in and do this and
this and this and your skills
come in and do this and this
and this and that actually
creates something quite cool
and effective together, right?
And, and, and we still do that.
Uh, I think what we are missing
is, is, to go from, I don't I'm
using the right English
terminology but from
collaborating to converging or
or to to merging in a sense.
Where where you create a space
that where where where it's not
law and health. But where it's
something different. Right? Uh
and and and we haven't gotten

there yet. Uh I I hope we will at least get fragments of it. We probably already have fragments of it but but that's what we're looking for. That's what we are looking for in this work with with standing how can we because we we tell the UN okay but when you interview victims to get to log violations you need you need you cannot just ask them that I mean you need to also you are after all foreseeing transitional justice processes. You need to ask them what they want. But then they say okay but so should I ask them you know do you want do you want currency of non repetition? Do you want satisfaction? You want rehabilitation? You know they what the hell are they going to answer that question, right? Uh and and so that's that that's what we're missing. Uh in in in in my mind, I mean, there are many other things. It's but but at least in in in that particular area. So, I I'm I'm really sorry. I I I have to run now. If it goes quick, I will I will come right back in but and and I really hope we can continue this discussion but but I hope it was that was at least my version of ISCT slash history. So, yeah. Oscar, thank you very much. I think that was that was a very helpful comment there at the end about the difficulties of bringing so many different people and I think that speaks to the heart

of what Craig was talking about. The way in which organised violence control to fragment society and breaks them into different groups. And how hard it is and I think his illustration or how difficult it is in Egypt. So good luck. May the teacher note beat you. Thank you. Thank you. you so much. I I hope to see you in the in the short while Right, moving along. Anna Moya. Anna has been working in this field for an immensely long time. Wow. And working as a Zimbabwean with the Zimbabweans in the little discussion we had at the beginning. She and former colleague who were working together You know sometimes this work feels like it was 100 years ago. Remember that they were working together in Johannesburg working with Zimbabwean refugees who were tortured. you have a wealth of experience on Zimbabwe and working on South Africa. And I'd like to hand it over to you now. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you Tony. Um it's really lovely to be to be in this meeting and also to hear from colleagues that we are working together. Who we are working together with Craig. Uh ask her on some of these issues. Uh we've worked at a at a national level but also we've escalated this work failed it and brought it to the to the regional and the international forums. So it's really excited to be part

of this forum as well. And also just to reconnect as well with former colleagues. Um my very first stint as a human rights lawyer was with the Zimbabwe Exiles Forum. Where we worked a lot with torture victims who were refugees in the Salam seekers. Uh coming from Zimbabwe back in two thousand and 7 Um and just some of the harrowing stories and experiences of torture survivors at the time. To someone fresh from university. Having just done masters in human rights and constitutional practice. But not ready to hear some of these stories and linking at that time with CSVR to provide psychosocial support services to some of the the some of our clients at the time. Doing litigation at the African Commission on Human and People right? But also just working with survivors, linking them to some of the services and ensuring that documentation and their legal status in South Africa Uh indeed 20 has been quite an experience. Um so we I work for an organisation that has done some of this work and has strongly highlighted in the beginning some of the initial initial work around mental health and psychosocial support through a consortium with Tree of Life in other organisations, Amani Trust, they were all part of the, of of that consortium of organisations that offered this specialised services to

survivors of organised violence and torture in Africa. And fast forward we now have the Pan African Reparations Initiative that asks spoke a bit about Pari. Um where some of the organisations CSU, Tree of Life are part of this this initiative. And we have done note around ensuring that we provide policy instruments, software instruments at a continental level that speaks to the real needs of victims and survivors of torture and organised violence in Africa. And one of our our documents that we have produced software instruments that we've produced at the African Commission level is the is the is is general comment number four on redra for victims of torture in Africa. Which really centres the experiences of victims and survivors of torture are into the services. Uh be it legal services, psychosocial services, and so forth and also ensures that the primary objective of redress should be the healing of survivors and victims of torture. So everything should really bring us to that one goal, overall goal or outcome of healing of survivors and victims of torture in Africa. So we are really excited about that. And Pari in twenty twenty, 2021, last year launched the rehabilitation manual, that also documents some of the experiences of

practitioners in providing rehabilitation to survivors of torture in Africa. And CSU took the lead in developing that document together with partners. IRCT, CSV, Tree of Life amongst others who really came together and put together those experiences towards ensuring that service providers be it from government, civil society actors, community based actors, also get first hand knowledge of how to implement mental health and psychosocial support services for victims of torture taking into account some of the experiences of victims and exactly what Craig spoke about earlier. Doing it in a way that really means a lot and ensures that the what victims need or what they foresee or would describe healing, what they would describe reparation, what they would describe, rehabilitation for them will be and working around providing those those kind of interventions and initiatives that are meaningful to the victim. Not those are not those that are too removed from what victims will deem to be to to lead to their healing. Um without much further ado, I'll speak a bit and maybe just pick a few points from what has been presented. Craig spoke earlier about some of the helplessness and the power dimensions of torture. I think one of the most unfortunate things about the crime of

torture is that victims are helpless when we are talking about assault and other crimes that can be committed by anyone. At least the victim would have an opportunity to, to, to, to, to, to fight back, but when the assault is being committed against a victim or a survivor, by someone who is uniformed, or a uniformed state personnel, like a police officer, someone from the army, someone from the intelligence, well the intelligence does not wear uniform, but they are feared because of the office that they represented the time of committing the the the torture act. So victims are helpless, survivors are helpless. They cannot fight back because of the power dimension. And not only that Craig also spoke about some of the impacts of of of torture on the lives of victims. I just want to echo that in our dealing with victims of torture from Zimbabwe in South Africa who have come to South Africa as refugees and asylum seekers. The very same impacts have been recorded. The neurological symptoms that Craig spoke about. The physical impacts, the psychological impacts and so forth. And what has also become quite evident from our experiences. From the work that we do in our trauma clinic. Providing MHPSS for mental health and psychosocial support services to victims is that

sense of helplessness suicidal thoughts for instance the anger, the frustration, the inability to deal with interpersonal relationships, inability to hold down a job, because of the trauma, unresolved trauma that many of the, of the survivors will be presenting with. And in our experiences, with dealing with victims, who are refugees and asylum seekers, is that many of them would have left their countries of origin with merely the clothes on their back, with no document whatsoever. Uh they would have left homes. They would have left their jobs. They would have left their livelihood. Sources of livelihoods. And coming to start a life in South Africa really becomes an art was task. Um and add onto that the daily stressors of not finding a job. Failing to get documentation because of high levels of corruption in South Africa. Uh and also onto that as well. Um xenophobic attack xenophobic violence in South Africa that threatens many of them who may have had at least gone on a healing journey through some of the services we provide. The relapse into into that traumatic experience. The reliving of the trauma. These are some of the challenges that refugees and asylum seekers who are torture victims usually contend with. Whilst other migrants may have the

alternative of going back to their countries of origin. refugees and asylum seekers, this alternative or this option of returning back to their countries of origin, is taken away because they are under the protection of the South African government. So it means that then they become victims of these xenophobic violence, xenophobic tendencies, xenophobic attacks in South Africa, and they're helpless even within this environment, to fight back or to speak up about their rights. There's also a lot of exploitation from the labour market in South Africa, because most of them they can't really speak up or speak about their labour rights or ask for better pay from employers. So again all of these daily stressors, additional stressors further exacerbate the traumatic experiences and the suffering that many victims of torture or survivors of torture who are refugees and asylum seekers are subjected to. The impacts of covid-19 have also added onto their experiences forcing them to relieve their trauma and relapse back into that into that place of traumatisation. Uh we have seen for instance many refugees and asylum seekers losing their jobs. And in South Africa currently we are also seeing the increase of xenophobic messaging, xenophobic threats, xenophobic

violence, the mobilisation against non-nationals in South Africa. Most of whom are refugees and asylum seekers. So in communities where they live in WhatsApp messages are going around where South Africans are mobilising around removing or evacuating non-nationals within their communities. There is a current operation right now that is being implemented at various levels. The police political elites are also calling for it. It's called Operation Dudula which really has many refugees and asylum seekers sitting on edge because they don't know what this means for them. And definitely it is a security threat. Um for refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa. The migration laws as well we are seeing a closing up as well for many who are on the ZSP permits. Um again having been told that their payments will not be renewed going forward. Some of those who opted for those permits are actually recognised or or they do apply. They also double up as refugees and asylum seekers who then took advantage of these permits which are which offer much more better protection and renewal than refugee permits or asylum seeker permits that are more that have got a lot of corruption when refugees or asylum seekers are trying to renew them and sometimes the periods within which to renew

them are very short. Three months, six months to a year, sometimes. And there's a lot of corruption, backlogs and so forth from home affairs in, in, in, in, in, in, in my are legalising their stay.

Especially for refugees and asylum seekers. For getting those papers. Um refugee status or or asylum seeker permits for instance. So there is a lot of issues that refugees and asylum seekers are facing in South Africa and some of these is coming out a lot in some of the work that we are doing with refugees in Asylum seekers. Um another challenge that we have always emphasised is the disenfranchisement of the refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants who are in South Africa, especially when it comes to exercising their right to vote in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean government has not afforded them an opportunity or made platforms for them available to vote in South Africa. So they are not participating in this governance processes or democratic processes in South Africa or in Zimbabwe.

Therefore this this exercise, disenfranchised group of migrants, again, almost exist in a no man's land, when it comes to exercising their governance rights, and, and responsibilities as citizens, and also, as, as, as, as, their active citizenship, as citizens

of a particular country. So these are some of the issues that many victims or survivors of organised violence and torture are facing South Africa.

Another big challenge that also derails the healing process or the healing journey of many victims or survivors of torture who are refugees and asylum seekers in South Africa is just the unwillingness of the South African government currently to open up spaces and accommodate Zimbabweans in South Africa. I think as far as five years back South Africa started not receiving Zimbabweans as refugees or asylum seekers. Even in instance is where it is clear that the person fleeing has fled political persecution and if they had remained in their country of origin, there are high chances that there will be tortured or even be or even be killed or be further subjected to persecution. So that political or that policy change or that policy decision has also affected the flight of Zimbabweans into South Africa or other neighbouring countries. seeking refuge. And this further exacerbate the trauma, the, the relieving of the trauma for many of them who are torture victims, there is nowhere to run to. Botswana has adopted the same policy. Uh, it's not accepting Zimbabweans, it's actually turning many Zimbabweans back home. And what

does this mean for recognised refugees and asylum seekers, it really means that the, this experience or the fear of being deported and being sent back to Zimbabwe, also causes additional trauma and forces them to relax in some of their in some of the gains or some of the some of the journey that they would have taken towards their healing. And we are seeing a lot of this presenting in a number of clients that we are seeing in South Africa. Many of them relapsing in their healing journey. Many of them going back to trauma. Many of them coming back and having undone all of the healing and benefits that we have worked with them over a number of years. So again this has impacts as well on the work that we are doing in providing mental health and psychosocial support. Perhaps also in this report that has been produced just looking again and us coming together as practitioners discussing how can we mitigate some of the additional stressors. The emerging issues that make that cause of the survivors to relapse in their healing journeys and go back into the traumatic experience. How can we mitigate this going forward? Uh and how can we create circles of healing that go beyond providing psychosocial support but leaning onto communities, leaning onto other

support networks that could provide some of these some of these services that are most needed by victims. I think Craig started us off that journey. When he spoke about the need now to look at what exists in some of the communities. What exists from faith based actors. What exists for instance as support networks that survivors can lean onto. That can then be upscaled and built upon to provide holistic services and a holistic approach to heal to providing help to survivors of torture and organised violence in Zimbabwe and beyond. I'll end here for now

I think my time is up already. I think a lot has been said as well. I was just now adding some of my experiences and experiences of CSVR in doing this work. Thank you.

Now Anna you

You added a very important dimension and dimension to this. And that is that what organized violence and torture does. It forces people to move. Uh those of you who've been watching the Ukraine, Ukraine experience where the EU is preparing for a flood of people out of the Ukraine as a consequence of war or organized violence and torture. So it's very important. And I have a question to you. Um just a quickie. And and that is that CSVR has been very intimately concerned with the AU process

on transitional justice. To what extent do you think that is and given you know what Craig and Oscar said. To what extent do you think this is really victim centred? Or is filling in the gaps that are much more legalistic? Thank you Tony for that question. Um the African Union Transitional Justice Policy has a specific focus on refugees internally displaced persons and other migrants looking at some of their experiences and how through transitional justice for instance we can attend to some of those challenges and specific issues that they they're dealing with for instance some of the issues that I have raised. The inability to participate in a transitional justice process in the country of origin because they're in a different country altogether. And the exclusion that they they usually encounter when these processes are being undertaken in a country of origin. And when reparations are being awarded for instance because they would not have participated in the process. In most instances they become ineligible to receive reparations. We've seen it with the African case for instance those who participated in the TLC are the ones who became eligible to receive reparations. And those who didn't come forward to to to give their to share their

experiences or as witnesses were found not to be eligible for reparations. So this exclusion is a big is a big issue for refugees, asylum seekers or the exiled community. When transitional justice processes are being undertaken. The policy at the African Union level I highlight some of these challenges and calls for a robust approach amongst other things to include the exiled communities. I think in practice the Gambia has done very well. It's one of the countries that we are working in. Uh providing technical support in the transitional justice process. Uh the Gambia, the Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission has done this very well. We had commissioners go to the Diaspora look for the exile community and get their testimonies from where they are based. Uh in encouraging them to come forward. So those those moves or those outreach and those outreach processes actually enabled the exiled communities to be part and parcel of the TRRC process in the Gambia to give testimony and to be eligible for for for reparations where these will be awarded in future as part of the requirement So we really need to include the the the exiled community, the refugees are internally displaced persons and asylum seekers who are based in other countries.

And the AUTJP provides for us some benchmarks on how this can be done successfully in practice.

Thank you so much Anna. That was very helpful input. Okay, our last presenter, Olivia Manguero. Uh we've been north and south and Olivia's at the coal face. Uh this this particular report is part of a series that people may have been watching a part of a consortium of organizations, Rao, CSU, the Human Rights forum, Veritas and Hugh Zimbabwe and we've been releasing these reports. I think very much in mind with what Craig has been saying about how we need to change the narratives. And so these reports have all been about the history. Now this is about the present. Uh Olivia works in the present. She works with the current victims as well as victims of past gross human rights violations. Olivia I'd like invite you in and welcome. Um thank you so much Tony and good evening to all the the participants. I'm here representing counselling services unit. And my presentation would touch heavily on our work here in counselling services unit CSU. And first and foremost I would like to pay homage to the ground breaking work done by Amani Trust. And the other four barriers of four bearers or predecessors that work with

OVTs. Or survivors of organised violence in torture before us. Uh we as taking over or continuing the work that was done by Amani Trust. And we have actually built on that foundation as well. As counselling services unit we started our operation in two thousand and three As a medical rehabilitation centre for victims of organised violence and torture in Zimbabwe. And we have been in this work for the past 18 years. And to date we have seen more than 28, 000 individuals. They have received our services. And most of our clients these are the the victims and survivors of organised violence in Teja come from rural communities. And they have experienced the multiple incidents of torture and violence since 2000. So it's a it's it's a very common phenomena at CSU for us to seek clients repeatedly. In connection with the different incidents that happen across time. And in the rural areas. I think the main reason is the main reason why we have a a huge number of clients coming from that area could be a result of poor city or lack of information on human rights. Um to to to our rural communities. To the extent that they are not able to really properly defend themselves. And it's a gap that we have actually also seen in at CSU. And we are working to ensure that our rural

communities receive information on human rights. And electoral laws in Zimbabwe through our call centre networks. And at CSU our main vision is to build a democratic and torture free Zimbabwe. Just like the other organisation and what the other speakers have said. And this is mainly centred on providing a comprehensive rehabilitation. And also prevention. Of torture. And what the is also done working with clients, communities and institutions of the state. When we talk about comprehensive rehabilitation, we are talking of a rehabilitation that is holistic in the sense that we are looking at different services and needs of clients being provided under one roof. And that's what CSU does as a medical rehabilitation centre. We offer psychosocial support to our clients. And we also offer medical rehabilitation for our clients as well as legal advice to our clients. So this is in line with our goal to provide comprehensive rehabilitation centre. And also another aspect of our work is to ensure the prevention of torture victims. This is done through our programmes of disseminating information on human rights, electoral laws like I said. And issues to do with psychological torture, identification and treatment. This is all done as a bid to

prevent the reoccurrence of torture. And very very importantly like what Craig talked about is our work of bringing communities together in this work. It's something that we really focus on at counselling services unit. We do not only work with clients but we work with the communities. From which the clients come from. We work with civic organisations. We work with the faith-based institutions as well as at times institutions of the states. So this is just a background of the work that CSU CSU does with the clients. And it's very important to take note that our work also involves close cooperation with community coordinators. These are coordinators that are already existing within the communities. This is something that we realised as we continued with our work with the victims and survivors, organised violence and torture that we do not really need to create a new system but to take advantage of a system that is already existing. So you find that certain civil organisations have got community coordinators in the rural communities. And we also have political institutions that have community coordinators. So we make use of these coordinators in identification of our clients as well as in

the dissemination of information related to human rights human rights violation and prevention of human rights violation. This community coordinators help us to identify the clients and also they help to coordinate the clients so that they can come to our centre to receive the the treatment that is on offer. And a lot of verification also happens in our team so that we are sure that we are really dealing with the right clients that are related to organised violence and torture. And one of our the strengths of our intervention is that our intervention is client focused. Focusing on the needs of the client. So we do a lot of interaction with the client. So that the client can feel comfortable to make use of the resource that we have an offer. Because what we are offering the the clients is a holistic approach with the different services to meet their needs. For some client they might opt for legal redress. For others their healing will come through. Counselling, interaction with others. And part of the counselling aspect we also do have art therapy. And we have the craft. And so the the client is given a lot of choices to choose from. But all these take place after we have documented the client's

stories. And before the documentation of the client's story, some of the, one of the things that we really, really pay cognizant of, is to ensure the safety of the client. The safety involves psychological safety where we assess the risk of the client to suicide, to harm. This is done, used, using the assessment tools that we have here. We also look at the safety of the client in terms of where they are coming from, as well as safety of the clients when they come to our centre. Usually they come to our centre in groups. But we also have walk-in clients coming in. And once they are in here Tony sorry Craig talked about issues of fragmentation and silence coming from resulting from OVT victimisation. It's something that we really pay cognizant of. And we really work very hard in ensuring that our clients are comfortable enough built a lot of trust with them so that they are free enough to talk to us. Because they have been silenced by the system. Now we are bringing them to our centre and we want them now to begin talking. So a lot of work ground work is done in terms of ensuring their safety, building their trust and stabilising their emotion so that they can begin to talk. And once they are able to talk we document their histories. Uh this documentation is also used for

medical. We will also compile medical affidavits. Uh based on the documentation that would have been provided in case the client might choose to seek legal redress. So that is part of the work that we do in terms of addressing the needs of the clients. And one of our strength is that we do not work in isolation. I know our previous speaker talked about the importance of working with other is providers and creating a network of service providers that meet the needs of our survivors. So at CSU we have been working very very closely on that and we're a very strong network of service providers that we work with in providing the needs of our our survivors and victims organised violence and torture. And this network includes like I said before the civil the civil society, political institutions. At times we also work with government institutions and the faith healers. So we do have a directory of service providers who will link our clients to depending on their needs. Excuse me. And in in our work we also we have also taken note like what Tony pointed out in the reports the shortage of mental health practitioners. Yes this was a problem in the 1990s with the money trust. And it continuously it's still a continuous problem with us. Given the brain drain of our health practitioners going to

greener pastures. So we have taken note of that and in order to mitigate for this we we have embarked on a series of training of healthcare workers. In the identification and management of psychological trauma. So these healthcare workers are found in the district hospitals. In the communities where the survivors are coming from. So they represent us we are not there. And they are usually the first point of contact if the clients face any challenges. So with these healthcare workers we have capacity them with skills. Skills related to identification and management of trauma. The basic stuff. And in some instances we have also given them information on human rights violation, electoral laws. So that they are able to offer a complete package to our clients in places where we cannot reach interestingly we have also started a new program which is really been well received of providing basic training on cognitive behavioral therapy to rehab technicians in districts, hospitals. So we are really to alleviate this problem. Um I I think like what Tony said in the report most of the work is done by the NGOs. It will be very good to also involve the government. I know we have also been working with the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. But more work can

be done with them. And I think this report really will send the message that is very important to involve the government. And in my view if the government is involved cases of impunity can also be reduced because they will also push forward for the arrest of some of the perpetrators that have violated our crimes. And I think with that I'll end my discussion. Thank you so much. Thank you so much Olivia. I mean, you've raised the breath and depth of the difficulties of being an NGO working with organized violence and torture. Uh I'm I'm looking at time here and I'd like to at this particular point throw throw the floor open to folk who have comments or observations. So if you do, if you just go to the little boxes the bottom that has reactions. Put your hand up. We'll be very happy to hear from you.

I'll give you a minute.

Any comments? So far I think a very rich and complex discussion. What I'm waiting for people to feed in. It's it raises extremely broad and difficult problems. From Craig through to Aska, through to Anna, talking about north of Limpopo. And then to Olivia talking about South of Limpopo. And the difficulties faced by Zimbabwe, but, but many, many, many countries in the world, face this problem where organised violence and torture

takes place. Uh I'm just looking to see if their hands up there. If they're not maybe I could go back sequentially. Oh Lynn. Lynn Walker, please and unmute yourself. Okay? Learn. Good evening Tony. Good evening Craig and Anna and Olivia and we'll just first of all thank you very much all of you for your your really amazing presentations and the yeah the richness and the depth of the the points that you've made, the presentation you've made and I I guess really it isn't really anything new but I just really wanted to endorse so many points that have been made by the presenters from the perspective of Tree of Life and how much we'd really appreciated the the partnership and the collaboration that we've done with many of the agencies that have spoken you know over the years Um to reiterate that. And I really wanted to pick up on some really important points and I think Olivia picked up on it as well about the fact that the importance of community and Craig talked about that about how fragmentation happens at various levels. And how you know healing you need to address the fragmentation at those various levels. So isolation, the stigma and the role that community plays in that and the role of having responses and rehabilitation services focusing at community

level rather than being overly clinical. But that that layering is really important that you have this clinical responses and then you have the the graduation and the layering into community responses. And that's certainly something that this trip like we've really found. And to really echo something that Craig said about how you need to listen to the victims and how many of the victims we talk about really yeah Craig Echo what you said about for them healing is not a legal pathway. It's not getting compensation or whatever. It isn't actually about moving on with your life. Being able to find yourself again. Find your community. Have hope for the future and to move on with your life with a sense of hope. And that is so important. So for so many survivors of organised violence and torture. And and also just to echo one of the things that I think was was said also by Anna and others about involving survivors, involving them in services and not just at a peripheral level. I mean, I think we often see lip service pay to that, you know. The survivors are wheeled out to give testimony at times when, you know, organisations like us are doing public events but actually involving them in the rehabilitation process as a I think Olivia said involving them in the support and at level. And that's not just a a

really kind of wise way to to do rehabilitation. It's part of a rehabilitation process for the survivors themselves. I mean we've got we're a survivor led organisation and the survivors in Tree of Life say part of their rehabilitation was a being able to help other people. Part of their sense of agency. And moving on there whether that's it's actually seeing other survivors move on with their lives and and start to recover from their traumatic experiences. So I just really wanted to so many amazing things that have been said this evening and to thank you all. Thanks Tony. Thank you so much Lynn. Sonando, long time. Please go ahead. Hi, thanks very much. Um I've just put a link in the chat to an interview with Alexandria Ocasio Cortez in the US. Um and she was asked whether she would ever give up her position as a as a politician and and return to doing community activism. And her advice it was towards the end of the interview. Her advice was that it's it's the only way to combat hopelessness. Um that when when people are feeling hopeless, then the way to get out of it is by doing something, and, you know, I, I, I'm still doing a lot of work with junior doctors on mentoring them, and trying to help them cope with this extreme sense of hopelessness, and, and I think the time, I

can't remember his name,
actually, Peter, someone or
another, when one of their
junior doctors was was
kidnapped and was then found a
few days later. Apparently
having been tortured. That
really mobilised them all to to
protest and and to withdraw
their services. It's that act
of of doing something that
helps people carry on and I
think that's what we have to
combat. It's such an extreme
loss of morale right now that
it's often hard to know what to
do. But there are small things
that can be done. And I think
we should look for those
because the whole issue but
violence as I said in the chat
much much wider than just
what's happened to torture
victims. You know people are
still reeling from from what
happened in their reeling from
what happened with the neglect
of the aids pandemic. Uh
they're now trying to cope with
COVID with the loss of a lot of
a lot of people, a lot of
colleagues and it just goes on
and on. One one thing after
another and we've had more than
20 years of this. So we to find
ways of addressing this concept
of this this hopelessness that
comes with it. That's right.
Thank you Sonanda. I think
that's a very important
observation and I think links
very strongly to to what Craig
spoke at the beginning about
the fragmentation and the

destruction of social capital
if I can do that. Um I'm
mindful of time. So, before I
make some winding up remarks,
perhaps I can go back I think
it was a very specific question
to Craig. So, maybe I'll start
with you. Uh I don't know, Cra
if you saw that in the chat. Um
maybe you can address that and
maybe we could have some
comments then from Anna and
Olivia and Oscar who I think
has come back from being beaten
up by his teacher. Doctor
Craig, over to you. Ja, I mean,
as I, as I reconsider that word
reasonable, I, I do think it
sort of implies that what is in
the legal frameworks that
guides us is somehow
unreasonable, which is
certainly not what I intended
to imply at all. Um, but some
of the the responses we've
we've been having is for
example to be treated with
sufficient dignity to be able
to create a home for themselves
in the country that they find
themselves in now. So this was
with a refugee population. Um
and the refugee population in a
fairly xenophobic context. And
people really suffering with a
sense of loss of home. And
everything that home means. And
how that plays out
intergenerationally where
children are then born into a
new society. It's the only
society they know. But their
parents are are holding onto a
memory of a home that's been

destroyed and a home that's been lost to them. and listening to people talk about, we just wish we had space and respect from the community around us to be able to recreate a home and a space for our culture and our language and our traditions and our children and that would be both justice and healing for us. And and that's you know that's challenged me to really think about what home means. Um, what family means. Um, it certainly ties in with the psychological constructs of ambiguous loss. Where you're trying to recreate something and you're imagining how it should be, but it's never quite what you want. The ambiguous loss people talk about something being there and not there at the same time. So, so that's one example. Um other examples are around things like memorialisation. Um and I and I I want to dig in on this one just briefly. Cos here I've been involved with the International Criminal Court and their work in Northern Uganda and the war with the LRA. Um And what's happened there is certain communities have been kind of pulled out and used as exemplars or examples of the atrocities committed in the war with the LRA. Not always by the LRA. Um and they've they've sort of they've received some reparations at a community level. But their neighbours who

went through exactly the same stuff. Their story isn't told at all. And so lot of the discussions about justice are actually about equity within and between communities who have been impacted by by organised violence and torture. And so it's a different lens to the kind of lens that I would have automatically brought to the I hope I hope that helps a little bit. I know we're out of time.

Thanks Craig. Were there any other comments you wanted to make at this point? I just really wanted to underline the first comment in the chat about how do we sustain and support the community of people working for justice and healing in the world and in Zimbabwe. I think I think that's fundamental. Um I think it's about security. I think it's about care for each other. Again it's about solidarity. Um and one of the things CVT offers is that we manage a measure called the professional quality of life measure. Um I write the website into the chat. But that's a that's a tool that people can use to monitor their own well-being over time. We've also added a new version of it, we've added a lot of sort of just handouts for tools on self-care and, and so, you know, the moral we bring material into that realm of supporting the advocates and the healers, then, you know,

the longer we're going to be sustainable and the better we're going to do. Thank you Craig. And thanks to CBT who've been in the struggle a long time and you just as long. Maybe I can move to Aska. I I I think you're back. You're probably not beaten up by your teacher. I wondered whether you had any last remarks on what you've been able to fix since then.

Oscar, over to you.

Oscar, maybe you're here but not here. Okay, Anna.

ah perhaps you can give some last reflections on what Thank you. Thank you Twani for for this. Uh my last reflections really were also based on some of my some of my my my very long presentation. But I also wanted to talk about just how the framing of survivors and victims of torture. Uh I know it's CSCR we are talking a lot. Um we have been for the past few years talking a lot about the issue of leadership. Um and and woundedness. And how some of these woundedness for instance has really trickled through from leaders who for instance saw a lot of things during the liberation struggle. But were victims at the time but also the cyclical nature of of of perpetrators turned victims and victims turned perpetrators. And how this plays out in society. And how we address it as well. In in in helping survivors of organised

violence and torture. Uh and what we have noticed and some of the work that we are doing is that wounded leaders lead from their trauma And some of their responses are actually traumatic responses. Um and this usually perpetuates the violence that we see in society and in communities. They are unable to lead from a place of peace or being peace peace enablers. So they lead from their wounds. Uh we have communities as well that are wounded. And when communities wounded. Some of their responses are also wounded responses and within communities we have leaders at various levels. family leaders. Uh we have church leaders. We have directors and so forth and they are leading also is from this wounded place. This wounded place or a traumatic place. And of course we have wounded individuals. Again when we look at the bottom up approach wounded leaders become members of a of of a society. And when we have wounded members then we have a wound society, when wounded society, societies or communities amongst those we have leaders as well. So it's a cyclical nature that really fits onto it. So how we address issues of trauma and help survivors should also look at this interchangeability between victims of victimhood and perpetratorhood. And how we

address that through a a mental health and psychosocial support lens is also important towards healing survival and achieving sustainable peace in societies and in communities. Thank you Tony.

That

that was a very very important intervention. And I think in Southern Africa and Craig started off talking a little bit about liberation movements. And liberation movements are movements that are based on war. And I think there's substantial evidence to suggest that the leaders that we have. Need healing in a very important way. And one of the absences of that healing is part of problems we face. I think that you bring a new dimension to all the discussions that are going on in the political economy of Southern Africa. About why liberation movements don't transmute into genuine ordinary political parties. And I think that's very important and CSVR has done some very important work there. Thank you very much. I think it was a very important exercise. Uh Olivia Comments observations. Um I I I think for me it's very important to work on issues to do with fragmentation. And bringing together the communities. Importantly working with the individual and then extending further to the communities to society. As part

of healing. Not just only focusing on the individual and also to see whether we can engage the government institution in this whole process of healing. And working together as service providers that provide healing. I think for me this will help a lot in helping the OVT and getting and getting a community that is torture free. Thank you. Thank you. Thanks very much. Okay, I, I want to make some remarks at the end here. Um, these were remarks I was really going to make at the end. Uh, and I'm very sorry that Francis couldn't be here to lead us through this.

I want to make some really somewhat pithy and probably confrontational remarks. I think the first thing that is important to say is that this discussion tonight throughout some obvious and not so obvious conclusions. and specifically in respect of Zimbabwe but as Craig and other people have pointed out, more broadly than that. Firstly, that what we have to understand about Zimbabwe, there is huge morbidity. What we mean by morbidity of people who are suffering from the consequences of organised by our nation. And violence. And that stretches over five decades. Uh we sometimes compartmentalise. What we're doing in Zimbabwe into this period and that period. But we have to look at

the fact that we have 50 years in which organised violence and torture has been a fundamental part of the way in which we do political problem solving. Secondly, as everybody has pointed out, the evidence shows that the consequences of organised violence and torture are severe long-term and require a broad program of assistance. We also have to understand that the consequences come from both the direct experience of OVT. In other words, that you were actually tortured or you lived in a situation in which violence actually happened to you. As well as the situation, living where organised violence and torture is common. Some people call this living in a state of terror. What that means is that you live in a state in which organised violence and torture takes place around you. Even if you're not a direct victim, it's happening around you. That has an impact. And what we've learnt from the evidence, Craig was talking about very much about how much we know. That organised violence and torture. Organised and torture and terror live side by side. They reinforce each other and they create different kinds of victims and survivors. The evidence on individuals is that organized violence and torture causes post-traumatic stress disorder and living in a state

of terror causes depression. Now I I I want to illustrate this by two stories. one relates to organised violence and torture. The other relates to terror. The first goes back to the liberation war. And an interview I had with a very old man who had been tortured during the liberation war. He had been beaten mercilessly. And one of the consequences of that was if he acquired a very severe backache. backpack injury made it very impossible to this man who lived in Mount Darwin to work in the fields. When he worked in the fields, his back pain was extreme. And the back pain caused him to be a very irritable, angry man. And he would shout at people. And eventually he learned that the shouting at people was making his family unhappy. And he stopped shouting. And the consequence for this man was that he became deeply depressed. He couldn't work in the fields. He became dysfunctional in his family. And his family was deeply worried about why he'd become a withdrawn human being. That's a long term consequence. This is a man I met and interviewed. Nearly three decades after he'd received this injury during the liberation. The second example I want to give you is living in a state of terror. We did some research with the teachers. Uh in the aftermath of 2008. And we discovered that the teachers

reported that half of them had had an experience of organised violence and torture. And half of them, in other words twenty-five%. That had happened at school. that meant was that happened primarily at schools in which which were primary schools. These were little children. They watched their teachers get assaulted, humiliated and beaten. In front of all the people. All the pupils. And that was a demonstration of those teachers belonging to a political party. Now, some of those children came from teachers who were at school. Some of them came from other families. But all of those little children went home and wondered whether their parents part of the group, that could be assaulted or tortured. And they lived in areas in which teachers and other people in the community were attacked and their houses burnt. So those children grew up in a state of terror. That's in the past. Both are in the past. But these may be experiences that children will face here. Now these are just illustrated. And there are thousands more examples. From the report and organised violence and torture over the years. In fact there's almost nearly 600 reports on OVT from 1965 onwards. And it tells us that organised violence and torture is the

default setting for solving political conflict. And has been for 50 years. If you've got problems of the other side what you do is you resort to organise violence and torture. It tells us that the burden of care for these victims is enormous. We're talking hundreds of thousands of people here. And this should be the primary concern of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. But it isn't. The NPCRC in fact is concerned with peace and reconciliation. And not with the victims and survivors. Now I mentioned earlier the principles principles. That were argued for a very long time, 1993. The principles that are needed to restore a country to democracy. And inclusiveness. After periods of organised violence and torture. Four principles. Truth, justice, non-recurrence and reparations. But the easiest of these is reparations. And the easiest of all the reparations which are restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, is rehabilitation. Fixing the people. Now Zimbabwe is exemplary in a way in which civil society is developed appropriate methods for helping victims of survivors. You heard that. North and south of Limpopo. Our victims of organised violence and torture are being helped. They're being

helped from individual care to group based and community methods. Even down to dealing with the debt. Through exclamations and the closure of family grief. And some of these are illustrated in the report that we launched today. Now this has not been done by the state. Or the government or independent commissions. It's been done by NGOs and civil society organisations. And now they're under potential attack use the the PVO bill. Now this is scandalous. It is a scandal. That those who trumpet the importance of the liberation war. Care so little for the victims of that war. I know Armani Trust was one of the first organisations ever looked at the victims of organised violence and torture. From the liberation war. It's a scandal that a government that admits that charitable things happened in the 1980s. Focuses on every other consequence than the direct suffering of the victims and survivors. That's what's going on in respect of we talk about IDs birth certificates. We talk about all sorts of things. But we do not talk about truth, justice and rehabilitation. It's a scandal that the government continuously allows organised violence to continue to take place. during elections. It's a scandal that government puts the PVO bill therefore what we

have to bear in mind As everybody said, it's not just assisting the victims and survivors of torture. We must not deal merely with the system, damages and communities and all the issues. It means a fundamental change. I want to thank everybody who persists today.

this has been rich. It's been long. It's been complicated and it's been difficult to hear.

Thank you Craig. Thank you Anna. Thank you Oscar. Uh thank you Olivia. And thank you all for listening. I'd like to hand this back to Eber. Thank you Ebo. Thanks Tony. Thanks.

Thanks Tony and the team. the session, a very interesting session on helping the victims. And survivors of organised violence and torture in Zimbabwe. Report and very engaging. we even went beyond normal time. We thought we would end earlier but so intense and so interesting with the discussion that we all glued to it. And thank everybody who has joined us on this. And before I again thank Tony and the team is just to remind you that next week we are looking at a book by Godfrey Kanyenze. Leaving so many behind. The link between politics and the economy in Zimbabwe. The be launched. We hope to to carry it virtual as well. Um next next Thursday the third. And on the tenth we have another session on the

elections. Understanding the
twenty eighteen Zimbabwe
elections. A technical
manipulation of elections.
Phase two. So that's
forthcoming. And thank you.
Keep in touch. And good night.